

mye positioning a thermoformable plastic material [around predetermined] at the locations on said positive mold for providing increased support for the [natural foot orthosis] the lower extremity at said [predetermined] locations;

wrapping a thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold and said thermoformable plastic material, said thermoformable plastic sheet having a surface area greater than said thermoformable plastic material; and

DI vacuum sealing said thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold so that said thermoformable plastic sheet and said thermoformable plastic material [combine] bond together.

38. (Amended) A method of forming a natural foot orthosis for providing support for a lower extremity, comprising the steps of:

forming a positive mold of said lower extremity;

forming areas for increased support in said positive mold by modifying the positive mold of the lower extremity at predetermined locations on said positive mold such that said positive mold deviates from a shape of the lower extremity [to provide increased support of the lower extremity at said predetermined locations],

positioning a thermoformable plastic material around said predetermined locations on said positive mold for providing increased support for the natural foot orthosis at said predetermined locations;

wrapping a thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold and said thermoformable plastic material; and

vacuum sealing said thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold so that said thermoformable plastic sheet and said thermoformable plastic material bond together, wherein said areas of increased support act as pressure points against the lower extremity.

REMARKS

As discussed during the telephone conversation with Examiner Saydah on January 14, 2000, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 38 clearly distinguish over the prior art of record and particularly the newly cited reference to Wehr.

As can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claim 1 has been amended to recite the positive step of determining locations where additional support is needed for the lower extremity and positioning a thermoplastic material at the locations on said positive mold for providing increased support for the lower extremity at said locations, wrapping a thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold and said thermoformable plastic material, said thermoformable plastic sheet having a surface area greater than said thermoformable plastic material and vacuum sealings said thermoformable plastic sheet around said positive mold so that said thermoformable plastic sheet and said thermoformable plastic material bond together. Clearly, the reference to Wehr fails to disclose or remotely suggest the manipulative steps of determining locations where additional support is needed for the lower extremity, positioning a thermoformable plastic material at such locations and subsequently, wrapping a thermoformable plastic sheet around the positive mold with the